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DATE: March 8, 2002

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group
Center for Medicaid and State Operations

SUBJECT: Recalled Sprinkler Heads - **ACTION**

TO: Associate Regional Administrators, DMSO
State Survey Agency Directors

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to regional office and state survey agency personnel who are involved in the survey and certification activities of health care facilities. The following life safety code information concerns a recall of sprinkler heads that may be installed in many of our certified facilities.

Recalled Sprinkler Heads

AUTHORITY – SOM 2470

Central Sprinkler Co., an affiliate of Tyco Fire Products LP of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, has agreed to replace 35 million of their fire sprinklers. Gem Sprinkler Co. and Star Sprinkler Inc. agreed to replace about 167,000 of their sprinklers. There will be no charge to consumers for the replacement.

The sprinkler heads in question have the words "CENTRAL" or "STAR," the letters "CSC," the letter "G" in triangle, or a star-shaped symbol stamped on either the metal sprinkler frame or on the deflector.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission press release, laboratory tests found that most of the sprinkler heads would function during fires, but "certain tested heads required higher water pressure to activate than may be available in particular buildings." The replacements will be phased in according to priority determined by the age of the sprinklers, their condition and the population affected. **Nursing homes and hospitals, for example, will be given priority. Please note that Central Sprinkler is not notifying hospitals and nursing homes of the recall.**

As such, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services wants to ensure that defective heads will not continue in service indefinitely. Consumers can call 1-800-871-3492 for more information on how to identify sprinklers covered in the replacement program. Information is also available at the Web site: www.SprinklerReplacement.com

The state survey agency in each state is to notify (via letter) all provider types subject to the Life Safety Code (Long Term Care, Hospitals, ICF-MR, Ambulatory Surgical, etc) of the sprinkler recall and instruct them to determine if their sprinkler heads are part of the recall. The provider can accomplish this by examining several of their sprinkler heads in widely different areas of the building to see if any have the words "CENTRAL" or "STAR," the letters "CSC," the letter "G" in triangle, or a star-shaped symbol stamped on either the metal sprinkler frame or on the deflector. If any of these words are on the head, the sprinkler is part of the recall. If the provider's sprinkler head is part of the recall, the provider should immediately contact Central, Star, or Gem Sprinkler Companies, depending on the specific heads involved, to obtain instructions for filing a claim.

States and providers will have to the end of this year to identify and replace recalled sprinkler heads. Providers that have not made good progress in replacing recalled sprinkler heads will be cited on their next annual survey (beginning in January of 2003) under tag K-62 for failure to maintain their sprinkler system. The judgement of "good progress" will be left to the individual surveyor to determine at the time of the survey. Generally, "good progress" would include documentation from Central, Star, or Gem that the company has been notified that the facility has the recalled heads and that a letter of commitment to place the facility on the list to be fitted with new sprinkler heads has been issued by Central, Star, or Gem and received by the facility.

/s/

Steven A. Pelovitz